

NOTHING CAN STOP GERMAN TOURISTS FROM TRAVELING



Tour operator bankruptcies, airline insolvencies and flight shame – the past year presented the German travel industry with many challenges. But the current HolidayCheck holiday monitor paints a clear picture: Germans' desire for a relaxing holiday with sun, beach and sea is as great as ever. The study reveals the travel trends of German tourists and price developments for the year 2020. This is based on over 100,000 bookings in the early booking period (01 November 2019 - 16 February 2020).

Two events had a lasting impact on the tourism year 2019: the insolvency of Germany's fourth-largest airline Germania in February and the bankruptcy of the oldest package tour operator Thomas Cook in October 2019. **Despite the drastic changes, the signs for the package tour market at the beginning of 2020 remain good.** Almost all the top ten package tour destinations for holidaymakers recorded growth in the period from 1 November 2019 to 16 February 2020. "The signs are still pointing to holidays," says the report. The Germans' love of travel is unbroken, which is also reflected in the bookings.

Weak Start to the Early Booking Season for Long-haul Destinations

However, the uncertainty of holidaymakers is reflected elsewhere: long-haul destinations such as the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Thailand suffered major losses at the beginning of the early booking season.

"In November and December of last year, in particular, we were able to see the effects of the Thomas Cook crisis on long-haul routes," explained the report. The affected charter airline Condor also played a role in this development and had a negative impact on holidaymakers' enjoyment of booking of typically Condor destinations.

Despite all this, holidaymakers often did not want to miss out on a trip. However, instead of another expensive long-distance trip, the cheaper alternative in the Mediterranean region was then booked. Currently, we see that the tide is turning again and that holidaymakers have been increasingly booking long-haul destinations since the beginning of February.

With an average year-on-year loss of more than ten percent, Mexico (-14 percent), Thailand (-13 percent) and the Dominican Republic (-10 percent) are nevertheless currently experiencing a strong decline in bookings. Mediterranean destinations such as Malta (+24 percent), Cyprus (+18 percent) and Croatia (+18 percent) show a trend with continuous growth in bookings.

Spain: Stagnation Instead of Innovation

Despite only marginal growth (+2 percent) for two years in a row, Spain still holds first place among the most popular package holiday destinations for German tourists this year. But the air is getting noticeably thinner, as Turkey is catching up with great strides. The reasons for the persistent booking slump are in particular the declines in the Canary Islands. Above all, a lack of investment in modernizing the houses and offers, while the price level remains high, is causing holidaymakers to look for an alternative with better value for money. The situation on the Balearic Islands is

somewhat better: Majorca in particular, with its wide range of all-inclusive offers and renovated hotel facilities, continues to be popular with holidaymakers (+3 percent).

Turkey and Egypt: On Course for Success

Turkey can continue its success story in the travel year 2020. With an increase of around seven percent in early bookings, the destination is unable to match its extreme growth from the previous year but is steadily catching up with Spain, the frontrunner. With a growth of 13 percent compared to the 2019 early booking season, Egypt is aiming for the top two holiday destinations. "Particularly holidaymakers who were often on the Canary Islands in previous years are now attracted by the better value for money in Egypt," noted. This can be clearly seen in the example of the Hurghada region - here the increase is around 19 percent compared to the previous year. The reasons for the growing popularity are especially the attractive flight offers and the trendy destination El Gouna with its numerous water sports and leisure facilities.

Greece and the United Arab Emirates: Investments Pay off

Investments are worthwhile - as demonstrated by the continuous growth in bookings in Greece (+10 percent) and the United Arab Emirates (+7 percent). **Greece scored particularly well with German tourists due to the numerous new boutique hotel openings and the range of new 4 and 5-star hotels on offer.** The United Arab Emirates, on the other hand, are attracting more and more holidaymakers with their successful mix of beach and city holidays. The further development of the tourist infrastructure is also bringing bathing regions around Dubai, such as Ras Al Khaimah, more into the focus of holidaymakers. But Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirates, is also focusing on the attractive mix of cultural urbanity and relaxing beach holidays in addition to expanding its tourism capacities.

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